

Report of Pressure to Implicate CIA

Washington

Watergate conspirator James W. McCord Jr. has told federal investigators that he and other defendants were subjected to "intense pressure" on the eve of their trial to claim the bugging of Democratic headquarters was a Central Intelligence Agency operation.

The Los Angeles Times learned yesterday that McCord, in a five-page memorandum given to authorities, claimed this planned defense was abandoned because he strenuously objected to it as a retired 19-year CIA veteran.

One defense lawyer in the case, refusing to be identified, said such a defense was discussed "on a preliminary basis" at two or three meetings of all defense attorneys. He conceded that McCord was opposed, but denied that this was the reason the plan was dropped.

REASONS

The lawyer, saying six of the seven Watergate defendants had worked for the CIA, added that there "absolutely" were reasons beyond that for asserting the CIA was involved.

Asked for the reasons, he said: "I don't care to go into that."

McCord gave a different picture in his memo, which

is understood to have been submitted to the Senate's special committee on Watergate, to a federal grand jury and to chief U.S. District Judge John J. Sirica.

"Intense pressure was applied on some of the defendants to falsely claim for purposes of a defense during the trial in January, 1973, that the Watergate operation was a CIA operation," McCord's memo said.

"This would have had the effect of clearing the Committee for the Re-Election of the President and the White House of responsibility for the operation."

BURGLARY

McCord's memo follows the disclosure of grand jury testimony by his fellow conspirator, E. Howard Hunt Jr., that the CIA supplied disguises and equipment used in the burglary of Daniel Ellsberg's Beverly Hills psychiatrist Sept. 3, 1971.

McCord has told associates he has no knowledge

of the Ellsberg case burglary. His memo, then, appears to be an attempt to defend the embattled agency which he says he still holds in high regard.

In the document, McCord does not specify the source of the pressure allegedly brought on himself and some of the defendants to implicate the CIA. He said, however, that Hunt — also a CIA veteran — was "very bitter" about McCord's rejection of this defense strategy.

McCord said that after two meetings with his lawyer at which this strategy was discussed "I was completely convinced that the White House was behind the idea and ploy which had been presented, and that the White House was turning ruthless and would do whatever was politically expedient at any one particular point in time to accomplish its own ends."